Department of
Environmental Protection
Bureau of Land & Water Quality December, 2002

O&M Newsletter

A monthly newsletter for wastewater discharge licensees, treatment facility operators and associated persons

Discharge Monitoring Reports

Each month the DEP preprints and mails to licensees hundreds of discharge monitoring reports, or "DMRs". All told, literally thousands of individual parameter measurements are reported back to the Department each month. These forms are the backbone of monitoring and compliance evaluation under the Clean Water Act. In addition to demonstrating how well a facility is complying with its permit limits, the monthly reports can provide important information about pollutant loadings to the environment and trends in the facility performance and capacity.

When a DMR is sent in to the DEP, it is first reviewed by the facility's assigned inspector. It is then forward to the bureau's data management unit where the information is entered into EPA's national data management system for the Clean Water Act, called the Permit Compliance System, or "PCS". The information is then electronically available to DEP and EPA; both in the Boston regional office and at headquarters, for review and evaluation of permit compliance status. DEP does this each month and EPA conducts quarterly reviews. The effluent data and evaluation of non-compliance is publicly available (you can view this using EPA's new web site at www.epa.gov/echo). Both DEP and EPA have the obligation to identify and take timely, appropriate action to address compliance problems.

For the reporting and review system to work efficiently, it is important the all facilities submit timely, accurate and complete monitoring reports. As your facility prepares its DMR, please consider the following:

- ✍ Each month, check the preprinted form against your permit conditions to assure that all the proper information is being requested and the effluent limits are correct.
- ✍ Make sure that data is reported in all open boxes on the preprinted form.
- ✍ If you did not conduct monitoring, or didn't have any discharge, be sure to use the proper "No Discharge Indicator" code. (See the O&M News article of September 2002 at www.state.me.us/dep/blwq/engin.html.)
- ✍ Please write clearly, being especially careful to make decimal points obvious. Please do not use commas.
- ✍ Make sure that you are reporting in the correct units of measurement.
- ✍ If you need to correct an entry on the form, initial the change.
- ✍ Assure that the monitoring report arrives at the DEP office specified in your discharge permit not later than the 15th of the following month. This is very important.

The DEP will return monitoring reports that are incomplete or in error and the facility is responsible for making corrections before the report can be accepted. Until accepted, the report is considered to be late. In terms of compliance status, missing or inaccurate monitoring reports are considered to be very significant problems that cannot be ignored.

Self-reporting is among the most important elements of DEP's Clean Water Act program. The Department is working to improve its own systems to ensure that DMRs and PCS data is timely and accurate. Everyone's efforts to make the flow of information timely and efficient are essential. If you have questions about proper reporting, please do not hesitate to contact your facility's assigned inspector for assistance.

For Practice

1. To get good nitrification in an activated sludge unit, the sludge should be:
   a. Bad smelling and black in color
   b. Brown in color with a musty odor
   c. Brown in color with a dark brown foam
   d. Settle to 900 mLs in a one-liter cylinder in 30 minutes.

2. Which sludge is the easiest to dewater?
   a. Raw secondary sludge
   b. Conditioned secondary sludge
   c. Raw primary sludge
   d. Sludge from the Kraus Process

3. How many cubic yards of material are removed from a ditch 125 feet long if the depth is 15 feet and the width is 8 feet?
   a. 128
   b. 556
   c. 1,224
   d. 10,800

4. What chemical is used in titration to indicate a pH change from acid to base?
   a. phenolphthalein
   b. sodium hypochlorite
   c. sodium thiosulphate
   d. sodium chloride

Approved Training

There are no formal training courses yet scheduled for the months of December or January. The JETCC and MRWA spring training calendars should be ready for the January issue of the *O&M News*.

Operator Certification Renewals

Certified Operators who have ***odd numbered*** certificates will be due for renewal by March 1, 2003. Those operators will receive their renewal notices in early January. To renew your certificate, you need to show proof of at least 18 hours of approved training and pay the renewal fee of $20.00. If you are due to renew in 2003 and do not have enough training and cannot take the required 18 hours before March 1, 2003, submit your renewal form and renewal fee before march 1st. Include a letter stating when you will be taking the training to meet the 18-hour requirement. If we do not hear from you by March 1, 2003, your certification will become inactive. If you are the operator in responsible charge of your treatment facility, it will be illegal for you to sign the DMR or Form 49 until you reactivate your certificate.

Fall 2002 Exam

The Fall Wastewater Operator Exams have been shipped to ABC for correction. We expect the results to be back before Christmas. Please don't call us to see if your exam results are back. We'll get the results out to you as soon as we get them. If you're thinking about taking the Spring exam, it will be given on May 14, 2003 in the usual locations. Applications ***must*** be postmarked by March 31, 2003 or in our hands by April 1, 2003.

Answers to *For Practice:*

1. b Nitrification requires a sludge with an MCRT of at least 8-10 days and a good supply of oxygen. Sludge with a medium brown color and a musty smell usually indicates a healthy, aerobic sludge.

2. c Primary Sludge is the easier sludge to dewater because the sludge particles are usually dense and not as hydrophilic (water loving) as secondary sludge particles. This is why operators often mix primary and secondary sludge to improve the dewatering characteristics.

3. b 125 ft. ? 15 ft.? 8 ft = 15000 cu. ft. ? 27 cu.ft./cu.yd = 555.6 cu.yd. which rounds to 556 cu.yd

4. a phenolphthalein changes from clear to pink when the pH rises from less than 7 to greater than 7.